

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACOUSTIC IMPACTS ON MARINE MAMMALS

CHARTER

A. Official Designation:

Advisory Committee on Acoustic Impacts on Marine Mammals (Committee)

B. Scope and Objectives:

The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2003 (Act), Public Law 108-7, directed the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission) to “fund an international conference or series of conferences to share findings, survey acoustic ‘threats’ to marine mammals, and develop means of reducing those threats while maintaining the oceans as a global highway of international commerce.” To assist in meeting this directive, the Commission establishes the Committee to:

- 1) review and evaluate available information on the impacts of human-generated sound on marine mammals, marine mammal populations, and other components of the marine environment,
- 2) identify areas of general scientific agreement and areas of uncertainty or disagreement related to such impacts,
- 3) identify research needs and make recommendations concerning priorities for research in critical areas to resolve uncertainties or disagreements, and
- 4) recommend management actions and strategies to help avoid and mitigate possible adverse effects of anthropogenic sounds on marine mammals and other components of the marine environment.

C. Duration:

The Committee is expected to exist for two years from the date of the charter, unless renewed or terminated prior to the expiration of the charter.

D. Reporting Relationship:

The Committee will report to the Chairman of the Marine Mammal Commission.

E. Support:

Support services for the Committee will be provided by the Marine Mammal Commission and those contracted by the Commission to provide such services.

F. Duties:

In carrying out its advisory role, the Committee will be responsible for:

- 1) the completion of a final report setting forth its deliberations, findings, and recommendations, and
- 2) fulfilling the objectives described in section B of this charter.

Each Committee member will be expected to:

- 1) attend and participate in all meetings, or assist in identifying an appropriately qualified alternate who, subject to Commission approval, will represent the member's interests at a particular meeting or set of meetings, and
- 2) solicit input from, and communicate with, the broader community whose interests the member represents.

G. Costs:

Annual operating costs are estimated to be approximately \$400,000 per year. It is estimated that one full time equivalent (1.0 FTE) staff will be required to support operation of the Committee.

H. Meetings:

The Committee is expected to meet in plenary session approximately four to six times over two years. Additional meetings by subcommittees or working groups may be convened as needed, with any such subcommittees or working groups reporting to the full Committee. Except as provided in regulations published at 41 C.F.R. §102-3.155 and 50 C.F.R. §510.7, meetings of the Committee will be open to the public, and will be announced in the Federal Register at least 15 days prior to each meeting.

Detailed minutes of each meeting of the Committee, as well as the final summary report, will be made available to the public on the Commission website and will be available for inspection and copying at the Commission offices in Bethesda, Maryland.

I. Organization:

The Committee will include members representing the following stakeholder and interest groups:

- entities whose activities introduce anthropogenic sounds into the marine environment, including the academic research community, industry (shipping, oil and gas exploration, etc.), and government agencies;
- non-governmental organizations, including environmental groups;
- scientists with pertinent expertise; and
- government agencies (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Navy, Minerals Management Service, etc.) with responsibilities concerning or affecting marine mammals.

The Commission will be responsible for selecting and appointing all Committee members. In doing so, the Commission will seek to ensure that representation on the Committee is balanced among the stakeholder interests.

The Commission may create any subcommittees or working groups needed to fulfill the duties of the Committee. The Commission and the Committee will establish operating procedures consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended.

J. Date of Termination:

The Committee will terminate 2 years from the date of charter filing, unless renewed or terminated at an earlier date.

K. Charter Filing Date:

November 17, 2003
David Cottingham
Executive Director